

MISCELLANEOUS NOTES

APPENDIX I

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR OBTAINING INFORMATION
ON CROCODILES

Forest Range: Forest Division:
Name & Designation of the Game Official:
Name, occupation and
address of the respondent:

Question

1. Please indicate the sites where more than 5 crocodiles could be seen:
Marsh crocodiles:
Number Locality
Number Locality
2. Please indicate if such crocodiles are available in same localities throughout the year.
Yes/No
3. How many egg-laying sites have you seen so far and where? Indicate localities:

4. Are crocodiles increasing in number or decreasing?
Increasing/Decreasing
5. If decreasing, please indicate reasons:
a) They are being hunted.
b) They are starving.
c) Their previous habitats are no longer suitable.
6. Where have you seen the biggest crocodile?
Approximate size Month/Year
Locality
7. Is it available now? Yes/No
8. What is the best time for spotting the crocodiles?
Season Time
9. Could you help in locating crocodiles.
Yes/No

21. NET-BOUND DEATH OF MARINE TURTLE *LEPIDOCHELYS*
OLIVACEA OFF WEST BENGAL COAST DURING 1984-85

It is now known that migration of the olive ridley turtle *Lepidochelys olivacea* into Bay of Bengal off the nesting sites at Gahirmatha beach of Orissa and the islands of Sundarbans, West Bengal commence by late October and the peak is reached by December-January (Silas *et al.* 1984). In this part of the Bay of Bengal extensive fishing also starts by late October.

From a survey during 1984-85 fishing season (October-February) it is recorded that a total of 438 turtles (186 males and 252

females) died following accidental capture in the nets of fishermen operating off-shore Digha, Jaldah and Junput in West Bengal. It is to be stated here that the fishermen usually do not let these turtles free in the sea water but carry these to the shore hoping revival following exposure to air. But again according to them, only 7-8% of such turtles revive. And for this reason in each fishing season a large number of carcasses at varying stage of decomposition can be seen at trade sites.

ECOLOGY AND ETHOLOGY LABORATORY,
DEPARTMENT OF ZOOLOGY,
CALCUTTA UNIVERSITY,
35 BALLYGUNGE CIRCULAR ROAD,
CALCUTTA 700 019.

S. K. RAUT

ZOOLOGICAL SURVEY OF INDIA,
CANNING, 24 PARGANAS,
WEST BENGAL,
August 21, 1985.

N. C. NANDI

REFERENCE

- SILAS, E. G., RAJAGOPALAN, M., DAN, S. S. & FERNANDO, A. B. (1984): Observations on the mass nesting and immediate postmass nesting influxes of the olive ridley *Lepidochelys olivacea* at Gahirmatha, Orissa-1984 season. *Bull. Cent. Mar. Fish. Res. Inst.*, 35: 76-82.

22. A NOTE ON CANNIBALISM IN FRESHWATER SOFTSHELLED
TURTLE *TRIONYX GANGETICUS* (CUVIER)

The feeding behaviour of *Trionyx gangeticus* is little known. Fishermen near Narmada and Chambal rivers report that the species scavenge on human corpses. Turtles inhabiting local lakes in Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh feed on fish and molluscs and also take aquatic vegetation mainly the water-chestnut (*Trapa bispinosa*). I report here on the cannibalistic behaviour of a turtle under captivity.

In June 1981, a turtle caught by local fishermen in the Upper lake of Bhopal was brought to our Department laboratory and kept in a tank measuring 1.5 x 0.4 x 0.3 m. The turtle was fed with some aquatic plants

for one week after which no food was given. In September 1981, seventeen spoiled eggs of another *Trionyx* were put in the tank. These eggs were consumed by the turtle over a period of 4 days. In September 1982, a second turtle was introduced into the tank. After six months I found that the second turtle had eaten the first (Probably after the latter's death). Only the hardshell and bones were left in the tank. From the above it is evident that *Trionyx gangeticus* can live without food for more than a year and it also consumes meat and eggs of its own species.

DEPARTMENT OF ZOOLOGY,
SAIFIA COLLEGE,
BHOPAL 462 001,
December 28, 1984.

R. J. RAO¹

¹ Present address: National Chambal Sanctuary,
P. O. Box No. 11, Morena, M.P.

23. A NOTE ON REPRODUCTION IN THE HIMALAYAN PIT VIPER
(*AGKISTRODON HIMALAYANUS*)

Although reportedly exceedingly common in some parts of its range (Smith 1943) the Himalayan pit viper (*Agkistrodon himalayanus*) remains poorly represented in the litera-

ture. On the reproductive habits of this species, Wall (1910) states: "I do not know the exact mating season, but it is probably in spring—April or May..... and the young